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A PLEA FOR GOVERNMENTAL SUPERVISION OF POSTS NECESSITATING NORMAL PER- CEPTION OF COLOR.

BY CHARLES A. OLIVER, A.M., M.D.

(Read April 12, 1905.)

When it is realized how important becomes normal perception of color in situations in which accurate color-vision is one of the main requisites or the sole determining factor for the safety of lives and the protection of property, it will be at once understood that definite rules for the obtainance of color-material, the construction of test and governing objects, and the choice of standards of necessary color-sense, should all be placed under the supervision of a controlling body from whom all requisite laws shall proceed, all regulations exercised, and all appeals of enforcement made.

Arbitrary selection of color-material, even though scientifically and properly obtained primarily; voluntary employment of necessarily many empirical — and hence oftentimes, imperfect — methods; and the existence of multitudinous controlling corporate bodies for the adjudication of uncertainties, neglect, and intentional wilful acts — must all exist — as they practically now do — just as long as no steps are taken to place the entire question under the supervision of a national governing board.

Railway service, no matter what the form of motor may be or in what manner the necessary duties are performed, is mainly governed during actual work by the proper and ready recognition of color-signals which are placed sufficiently distant for safety to those for whom the signalling is intended; naval and marine transport throughout the world is mostly accomplished amid its many vicissitudes of atmospheric and hydrostatic change, by quick and certain detections of chosen peculiarities of color situated at safe points of definite signification; and army signalling and geodetic survey work in their every varying degrees of necessity of occasion, are largely dependent for success upon both aided and unaided color vision. These conditions granted, it will be at once seen how vast the field of color employment is, how necessary that proper material shall be correctly used, and how important it becomes that the perfor-

mance of the actual work shall be limited to those who possess normal color-vision.

The facts set forth in this brief communication once recognized and systematically applied, thousands of lives must be annually protected and millions of property yearly saved ; a result for which this plea — a most urgent one — is offered ; a plea which demands that in this country — these United States of America — there shall be established a board of authority composed of those who are best suited for the establishment and the continued furtherance of the required work performed, meeting in association with representatives from the variously affected departments of state.